Journal of the Washington County Historical Society

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# Flash Back

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past for the future

Volume 56, Number 1, Winter 2006

**Washington County Historical Society**

118 East Dickson Street, Fayetteville, AR 72701

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# FLASHBACK

Journal of
the Washington County Historical Society

**Volume 56** **Winter 2006** **Number 1**

CONTENTS

*THE LETTERS OF W. H. CROW* Carolyn Duty Banks 1

*AN OLD LANDMARK GONE* 20

*THE RIDGE HOUSE: THE MISSING YEARS* Louise Bradshaw Ulmer 23

*BEAN CEMETERY AND BOB KIDD LAKE* Izola Preston 27

*REMEMBERING FAYETTE JUNCTION* Addie Lee Lister 29

*GREENLAND 1925–1935* Denele Campbell 31

Cover: Ridge House, Fayetteville, mid-1990s. Courtesy Shiloh Museum of Ozark History, Washington County Historical Society Collection (S-90-24-24).

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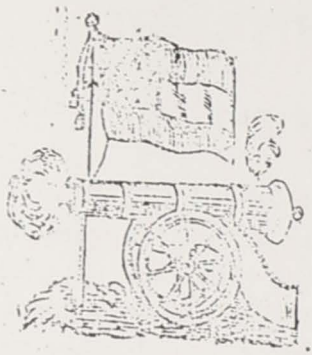

"Stand firmly by your cannon,
Let ball and grapeshot fly,
And trust in God and Davis,
But keep your powder dry."

Confederate States of Am

Richmond Va June

Dear Father and Mother

I seat myself this evening to d
a few lines to inform you that we
well We got here last Thursday and
Company here the most of the boys a
good health some of the boys are not
We found John Hammock in a very
with the Rumatic pains he will start
the morning We had a very pleasant t
came up We was not detained more
we got to Lynchburg there we lay ove
night but by that we got over to
look at it for it is the roughest plac
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thing that I never seen before I have m
myself down to day walking over Ric
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Hear Washington and all the great m
assembled I have seen things to day th

# THE LETTERS OF W. H. CROW

CAROLYN DUTY BANKS

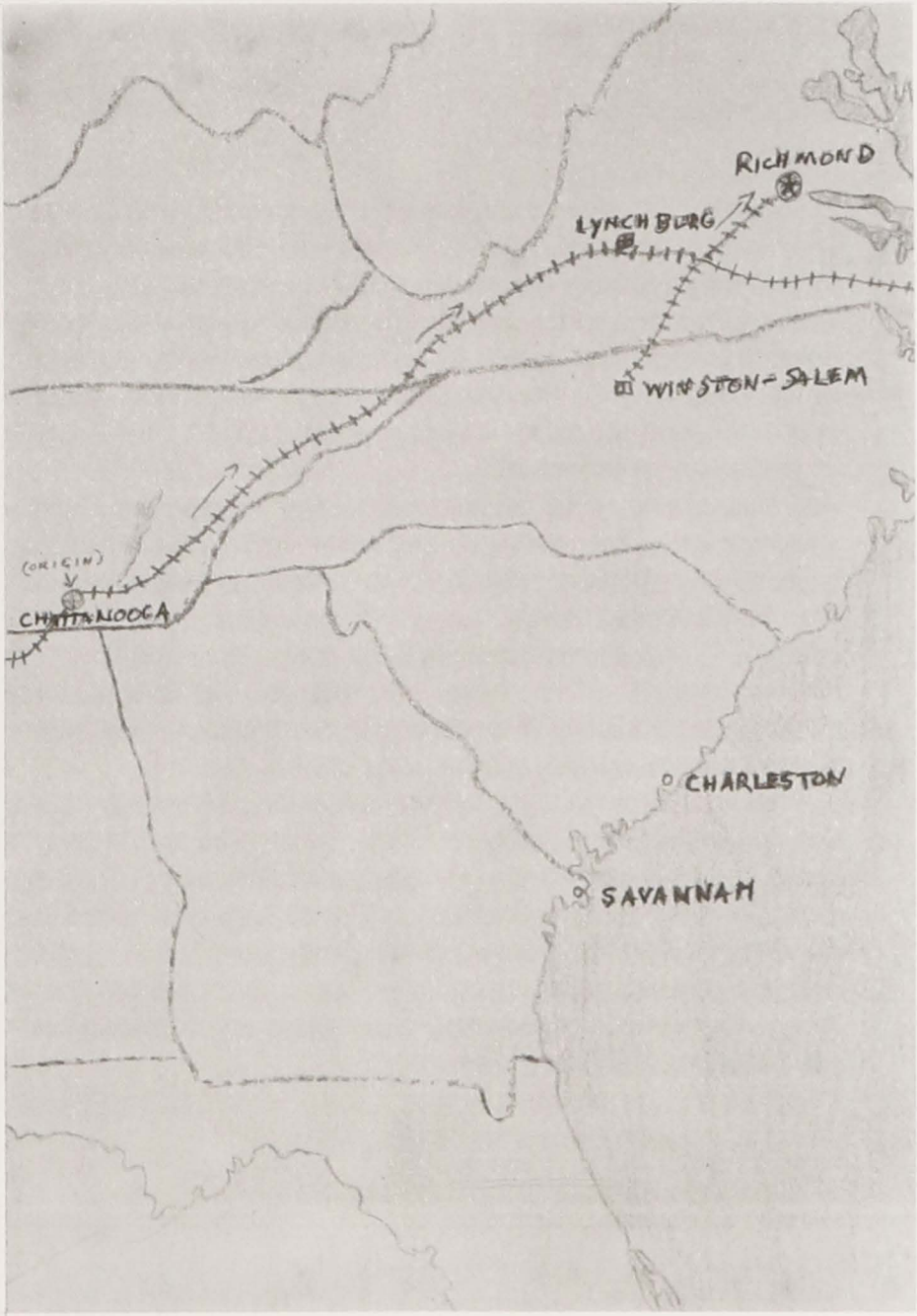
In 1963 Dr. James Hudson, dean of the graduate school of the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, and long time member of the faculty for the history department, called me into his office. He brought out a sheaf of letters sealed in archival wrap and displayed them on his desk. The papers, he said, had been given to him by a former student in Fayetteville, who had discovered them in the attic of his family home. He wished to give them to Dr. Hudson, to do with whatever he wished.

Hudson told me he did not have the time to write something about the letters for publication but felt strongly that something ought to be written, at least to preserve them as an element of Washington County family history. He gave me a photocopy of one letter and typed transcripts of the others. He asked me to research what sources I could find and write an article suitable for publication. I embarked on a task which stretched over years, with sadly few genealogical results but some historical interest.

Soon after giving me the transcripts and photocopy, Dr. Hudson suffered a reversal in health which caused his early retirement and eventual move to a nursing home facility. In the course of this, the originals of the letters were misplaced and were never found. With the manuscript essentially complete two years later, I attempted to locate the original letters, and found they had disappeared without a trace. The reproductions in this manuscript may be all that remain of the letters.

---

Carolyn Duty Banks is a former history teacher and staff member of the school of Fine Arts at the University of Arkansas. She is the author of several articles and one book and was editor and coauthor for three books on genealogy. Her primary field of interest is the history of Scotland and the American South during the nineteenth century.




July 1861: Rail route taken by W.H. Crow from Chattanooga (all Maps courtesy author).

## LETTERS OF W. H. CROW

In 1861, during the last five months of that year, a young Southern recruit in the Army of Northern Virginia, wrote a series of letters to his family at home. The three letters that survive illustrate the life of a recruit during the period between First Bull Run and the bleak winter that followed.

The writer signed his name W. H. Crow. It has not been possible to locate any definitive information about him. That the letters were said to have come out of an attic in Fayetteville, Arkansas, appears to link him to a local family. However, the letters will serve to establish his character, and let us enter with him into the greatest adventure of his life.

### LETTER ONE

Richmond Va July 20,1861

Dear Father and Mother and Friends

I seat myself this evening to drop you a few lines to inform you that we are all well. We got here last Thursday and formed the Company here. The most of the boys are enjoying good health, some of the boys are not. [crossed out: "a little unwell"] We found John Hammack in a very bad fix with the rumatic pains. He will start home in the morning. We had a pleasant trip as we came up. We was not delayed more [than] six hours until we got to Lynchburg. There we lay over one day and night but by that we got [to] go over the city and look at it. It is the roughest place for a town that ever you seen. In fact, I have seen many things that I never seen before. I have nearly walked myself down today walking over Richmond. I seen Congress conveen today. Was in the halls where Washington and all the great men have assembled. Have seen things today that are worth a great deal to me are [or] will be if I should be so lucky as to ever get home. Which I hope I will do, as dull as the prospect looks now.

There are very exciting times up here and well there may be. They had a battle at Manassas Gap yesterday. The Confederates beat them back three times and made them retreat. The Federalists lost 1,100 to 63. That was the report that the telegraph brought last night but the news came into the town a while ago that there was 962 Yankees to about 900 [Confederates?] and they are fighting there today and say the big battle is to be fought there tomorrow. We will be set to start there Monday. We have orders to march now...We have just now been mustered in. We fare as well as I expected. We have plenty of meat and bread, coffee, sugar...the tents are tolerably good. We have not made out our mess yet. I wish we had so that I could tell you who they were. I will tell you in my next letter. I say this much: that me, Tom and [Jem?] will stick together. There is more things here to get a man's money than ever I went anywhere to mill, though we have kept ours very well so far. I spend more for newspapers than for anything. We give 6 cents for a paper every morning. That is, we do [if] don't we could get them for 3 cents if we had them. I could write enough to fill a newspaper but I will tell you something of the horrors of an encampment. I can't give you anything of a correct number of the troops that are here but there are thousands of them here and we passed thousands of them as we came up. We left over 2000 at Chatanooga and passed others encamped on the way. I tell you, you never seen nor heard nothing in your lives if you could be here one day. It would make the hair rise on your heads. There is the fewest number but what are into all kinds of wickedness. There is from two to six men killed here every day. One shot yesterday within 90 steps of our encampment. Another knocked down with a gun. Anther had a bayonet stabbed through him. Six, I think, killed the day before, six shot today, and other cut up. Cards is the regular game here in the camp but Pa, I am going to remember the last word you spoke to me when we left the Depot. I want you to show this to all my Friends and tell them to pray for me every night

and morning...that if we fall in the battlefield, that we may fall in the arms of Jesus.

Want you to tell them boys to pitch in and make up Uncle Aaron's Company and let him come on for he will be needed. It is so dark I can't see to write good anymore and I will quit for this time [turn over] Send this to Will and all the rest of my friends...the girls especially. I hope you will excuse my bad writing and spelling for I can't hear myself talk frequently. Some [are] playing the fiddle and some fighting...some marching, some trying to read, some writing so nothing more. I remain your affectionate son and friend, W. H. Crow.

Goodbye
Direct your letters
W. H. Crow
Richmond VA
In the care of Capt. Higgins

The beginning paragraph of this first letter offers an excellent illustration of a standard misspelling mentioned by Bell Wiley in *Common Soldier In The Civil War.* Wiley states: "When correspondents attempted to use long and unfamiliar words they were apt to get unusual results, as shown in the following: A brim ham lillkern, hospitibel, Chic a har mana, mungunty, comodate, hysitian, coummling, regislatury, dyereaer, rumatis."(1) We find the latter misspelling in the first part of the letter, where Crow is telling of his arrival in Richmond. "We found John Hammack in a very bad fix with the rumatis pains. He will start home."

In the second paragraph Crow retells a report of a battle supposedly held at Manassas Gap on the 19th. In perusing military accounts, one comes to the conclusion that the battle to which he refers was neither Manassas Gap nor on the 19th of July, and in addition his casualty count is much inflated. According to Crow: "They had a battle at Manassas Gap yesterday. The Confederates

beat them back three times and made them retreat. The Federalists lost 1,100 to 63."

The only battle of that size that occurred near that date would have been the short conflict at Blackburn's Ford. Following that skirmish, General Beauregard sent a telegram requesting reinforcements. The fight consisted of an attack on the Ford by the Federals on July 18th. It resulted in a report of fifteen Confederates killed.(2) Another account of the battle, by Bruce Catton, reads:

> He [General Tyler, Union] sent a brigade forward to find out whether Bull Run was held by the Confederates. The brigade got down to the stream at Blackburn's Ford, blundered into sharp fire from artillery and infantry, lost eighty men, and saw one of its militia regiments go running back to the high command...the Rebels were there, all right.(3)

It can be seen that the casualty count taken from the above reports of approximately eighty Union to fifteen Confederate, is much different from Crow's report of eleven hundred to sixty-three, as he claims in his letter. No doubt rumors constantly circulated in the camps and were passed on in letters home.

Following the account of this battle, Crow writes that his group has orders to march to Manassas. These orders to go to Manassas were probably in response to the above mentioned plea from Beauregard for reinforcements. All through the month of July 1861, men were being sent into Richmond from their various states. By mid-July there were three small armies in Virginia. Beauregard had twenty-three thousand men at Manassas Junction, J. E. Johnston had eleven thousand troops near the upper end of the Shenandoah Valley, and J. B. Magruder had five thousand men on the peninsula between Richmond and the sea. On the 17th Beauregard had wired of the sporadic attacks. On the 18th he requested reinforcements. Johnston was ordered to reinforce

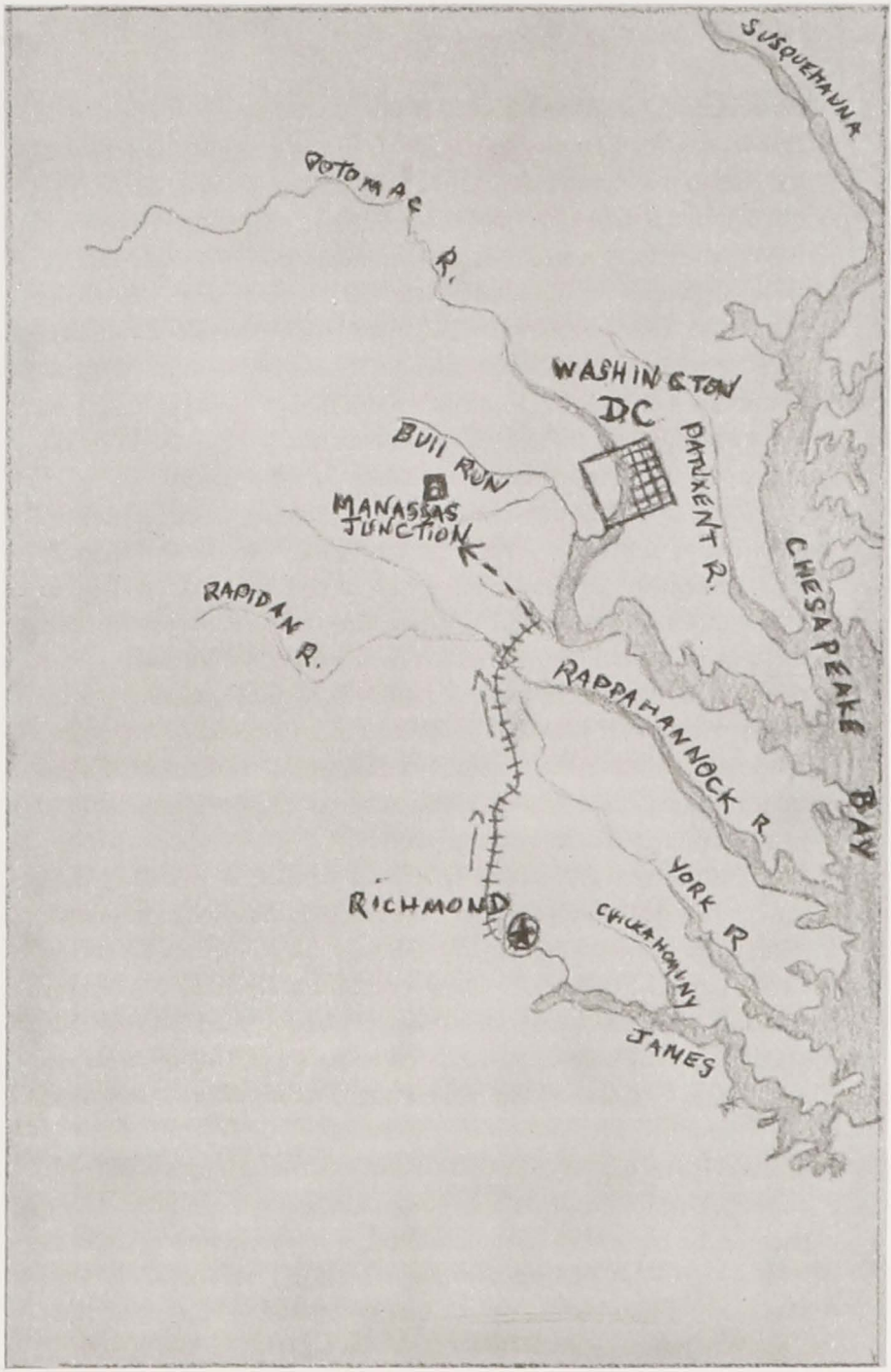
Beauregard. He arrived on the 20th. When Manassas [First Bull Run to the North] took place, part of Johnston's army and most of the Richmond recruits were still enroute to the scene of battle.(4)

The latter half of Crow's first letter concerns the dangers of Army life. He is apologetic for his expenditure for newspapers. Wiley discusses the allure of newspapers, reading being one of the main sources of recreation for many of the soldiers. Soldiers subscribed to papers from such cities as Richmond, Atlanta, Memphis, and Jackson, and after reading them thoroughly, passed them down a long line of waiting comrades, who read and reread the papers until the rough pages were worn through.(5)

Wiley confirms the prevalance of gambling as mentioned by Crow, stating it was the most pervasive "sin" in the Confederate encampments. He quotes an order issued by General Lee in November 1861, in which Lee claimed to be "pained " to learn that the vice of gambling existed and was becoming common in the army. Many apparently gambled away their their pay, even those who at most times would have avoided dice or cards.(6)

Crow closes with a mention of nighttime in camp with the fiddling and fighting going on concurrently. Wiley tells us that the instrumental music the Confederates used most frequently came from one or two messmates who brought their highly cherished fiddles and banjos from home. These amateur musicians would sit around the campfire at night and labor away at such tunes as "Hell Broke Loose in Georgia," " Billy in the Low Ground," "Arkansas Traveler,""Oh Lord, Gals One Friday," "When I Saw Sweet Nellie Home," and of course, "Dixie." A mess such as Crow's which could boast its own fiddle player was the object of widespread envy, said Wiley.(7)

We leave the young recruit sitting by the campfire with his comrades in the dusk, homesick but excited and proud. Excited because he has orders to march to the war. Proud because he has seen the halls of history. He writes his letter on stationery with slogans of a new nation. He dreams of Manassas and glory, little




August 1861: The route to Manassas.

knowing that he has already missed the glory and that Fate has prepared a far different destiny for him.

## LETTER TWO

Manassas Junction
August the 2 1861

Dear Brother and Sister It is with pleasure that I now seat myself to drop you a few lines. I have not had the opportunity of writing to you since I left home. I left home the 14th of last month. We got to Richmond the 19th. We left there the 22nd, Arrived here on the 23rd. We got here the Tuesday after the great battle at Manassas which you have heard of long since. I suppose there I seen the most horrible sight that I ever seen. That was the dead and wounded some with their heads shot all to pieces, others with their legs shot off, some with their eyes beat out and worse of all was when I went to the battleground and that was the fifth day after battle and I stood in one place and counted 12 dead men and a number of horses. I can't tell you anything about the signs of the times, about what will be done next. Everything is lying still here. There was about [faded: may be 7000, 1000, or "a thou"] of the Yankees killed in the fight at Manassas and 2000 of the Confederates. The fight lasted from 4 a.m. to 4 p.m. I will tell you something of camp life. It is sort of a hard life to live. We have plenty to eat and that that [*sic*] is good enough if we had Mama to cook it. There is nearly half the company that are not able for service. I have been very unwell ever since yesterday morning...the measles are raging in the camps. There are three in our company that have them...two out of my mess. T. A. is one of them. I would give you the names of my mess but it would take up too much paper. I will [send?] you some of them. There is Tom, Jem, T. A., Collumbus.....is others. Tell all of my friends there that

I am in the army and tell the boys that I would like to see them out here. I want you all to write to me for I have a bad chance to write here. I have not heard from home since we left. They were all well then. We are stationed about 25 miles from Washington City, I think. We are getting tolerably close to the Yankees. What do you think about it? We may be ordered on towards there in a few days and we may not. I can' tell.. We may have to drill six hours in the day and that out on an open field where there is no shade at all. Tell Uncle Mike I want him to write to me and all of them...So nothing more I remain your affectionate brother and friend.

W. H.Crow
Direct your letters to
Manassas Junction Va
in the care of Capt Higgins

This letter gives us the information that Crow's group has arrived at Manassas too late to have a real part in the big battle. The boy's first view of the debris of war and death is the beginning of his long disillusionment with the glory of warfare.

Wiley says that deep and persistent depression was common among the exhausted young soldiers.(8) The groaning and screaming of the wounded pierced their unhardened hearts to the quick. The sight of so many dead bodies mutilated beyond recognition must have overwhelmed the soldiers with horror and made the very thought of war repulsive. For most of the soldiers this introduction to war was probably the most terrible experience of their lives. They became immediately anxious to communicate the impressions to those whom they loved. As soon after battle as possible, it was common for the soldier to write home, and his letters gave vivid expression of the type of reaction they had had to their "baptism in fire."

Crow attempts to estimate the casualty count of the Manassas battle, but the agitation of his handwriting at this point reveals both

the depth of his shock and the unreliability of his information. The actual numerals in the letter are faded, some crossed over, but seem to read "1000[a thou] or 7000" Yankees and 2000 Confederates. The account of the battle by D. S. Freeman gives us a clearer idea of the scene that was viewed by Crow, and the official battle count of casualties. Freeman writes:

> Before dawn, rain began to fall and continued throughout Eastern Virginia all the 22nd. The numerous rivulets that flowed into Bull Run became swift creeks. Only the shallowest fords of the Run itself were passable. The spongy soil of camp and pasture made movement difficult even for the infantry. By none of the roads was mass pursuit possible. Loud was the lament, because everywhere the Confederate detachments penetrated that day, they found evidence that the Federals had become panic-striken and had abandonned all equipment and taken flight. (Public property recovered in the field included 28 excellent field guns, 37 caissons, half a million rounds of small arms ammunition, 4500 sets of firing equipment, 500 muskets, and 9 flags. Prisoners and wounded totaled about 1460 Federals, 500 less than gross Confederate casualties. As Beauregard's casualty list was incomplete, his losses are estimated at 2000. Federal casualties, listed officially at 2603, were probably more than 3000.) (9)

After his description of the battlefield, Crow sounds like the classic soldier griping about camp life. He mentions that measles are raging in the camps and that two men in his mess are sick. Wiley writes that of all the illnesses which harassed the Confederates, the first to attack was usually the measles.(10) During the summer of 1861, one out of every seven men in Virginia suffered from measles, and total cases for the three

summer months of 1861 were eight thousand. Wiley cites a letter written on June 11, 1861, by William R. Barksdale, stationed with a group from Mississippi.(11) Barksdale wrote that there was a great deal of sickness in his regiment and that measles and "improper sexual indulgence" accounted for most of the cases. Wiley, in discussing the medical skills of the time, states that for measles no satisfactory remedy seemed to be available, and for this disease, as in most other instances of uncertainty, doctors fell back on whiskey.(12)

Crow, as seems to have been common with other Confederates at Manassas, was impressed by the closeness of their position to Washington, D.C. He estimates their position as twenty-five miles from "Washington City" and describes this as "tolerably close on the Yankees." He, like many another, is confused by the inaction and wonders if they will pursue the enemy to the capital. Some of the situation that was annoying to Crow is explained by D.S. Freeman, who writes:

> During the days immediately following the battle of July 21, the poorly equipped commissaries and quartermasters were unable to supply promptly the larger army being assembled at the Manassas railhead....July 29, Beauregard appealed directly to Congress. He wired, "The want of food and transportation has made us lose all fruits of our victory. We ought at this moment to be in or about Washington, but we are perfectly anchored here and God only knows when we will be able to advance; without these means we can neither advance nor retreat." Later, Beauregard expressed the conviction that up until the 24th of July, the Confederacy had had the capability of capturing Washington, but the conditions of weather and the supply shortages had ended that possibility.(13)

Perhaps some of Crow's unhappiness is directly attributable to his shocking experience after the battle, some of it to his dislike of camp life, and the rest can be accounted for by a general feeling that seemed to pervade the Southern armies at that time. Bruce Catton succinctly explained this emotion in *The Coming Fury.*

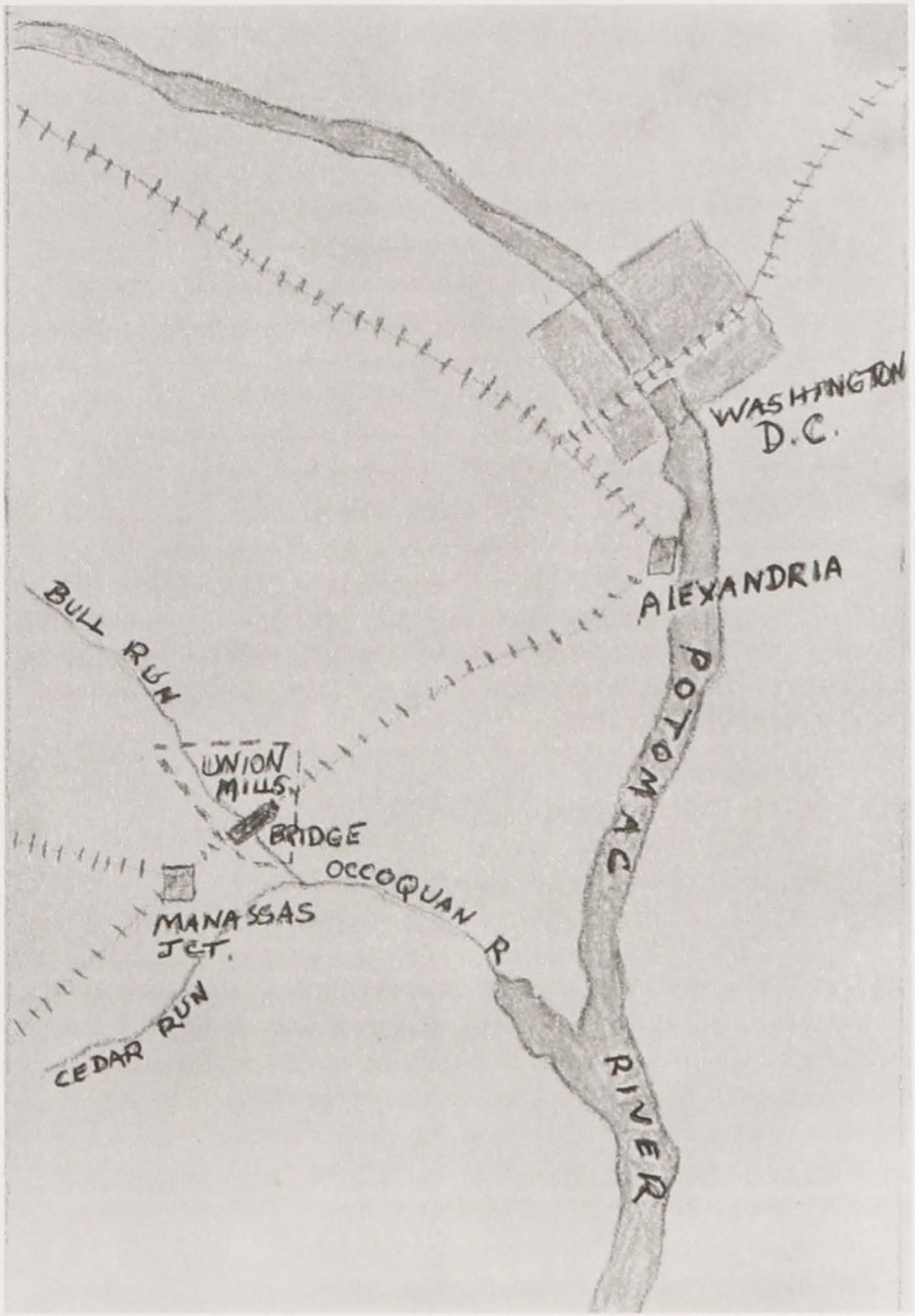
> After the victory at Bull Run, many Southerners felt that everything they wanted had practically been gained. Too many felt this way. Bull Run gave the North a reawakening, but it gave the South over-confidence. There was a good deal of feeling that now everyone ought to get back to his plowing.(14)

Undoubtedly, plowing was where Crow wanted to be. With this letter, we leave him on a cluttered battlefield, having missed his chance at glory, and contemplating nothing more exciting than drilling "six hours in a day and that out on an open field where there is no shade at all."

LETTER THREE

[October the...scratched out]
Camp near Union Mills
November the 2nd 1861

Dear Father and Mother...I again seat myself to write to you. I expect if you get all the letters I write, you will get tired reading them but when I think of home and the enjoyments of home, I want to be conversing with home folks as near as possible.
Although I am perfectly content with me lot...but I can tell you last night and today is hard enough to try our faith. I never heard it rain much harder nor heard the wind blow harder. Collumbus, Fites, Jem and I were lying in our tent about 4 o'clock in the night. The tent blew down and the wind ablowing and it raining. Col and me went out to drive the stobs. Jem [and] Pete inside holding it up. We




November 1861: Area of W.H. Crow's winter encampment.

got it up and lay down. About the time the boys got to sleep down it came again. We set it up again and Pete is up driving the stobs while the most of the rest of the boys are gone to Bull Run Bridge to remove a drift from it to keep it from washing away.

Me in the tent with a very bad cold and sore throat. Some of them hauling wood, some trying to cook, some grumbling about having nothing to eat since last night. I wish you could be here one hour to see our camp. It is worse outside the tent than it ever gets around our well and not much better in[side] the tents. We went out on picket last Monday and returned to camp Thursday. We had quite a pleasant trip on picket. We only stood guard one day and night. Our company, I mean.

I did not stand any myself for the fact that I was not well at that time. Thursday evening we were mustered in for pay for two months but it is uncertain when we will get the pay, though. Perhaps before long. I drew $30.00. Sent you $15 and have $5.00 left, so you may guess how we spend money here. It [is] strongly supposed by some that we will be sent home a while in the winter, but I don't have much confidence in it, though it may be so. There is one thing sure...we can't stay here in these tents. When I wrote to you before we were throwing up brestworks. We are still at it and will be for some time yet. The report is that one of our spies managed to have a conversation with the enemy. He says we will be attacked on the 4th of this [month]. He says there are two hundred thousand Yankees this side of Alexandria. We are ready for them and if they come we will give our Yankee friends as warm a reception as they have had lately. We are all looking and anxious for the fight though many of us will have to fall. We heard heavy firing down on the Potomac last evening. I expect they had a little fray there.

I have a letter in my satchel now ready to start to Bill Arther. Which I will start in the morning. I wish you would write whether he is still there or not. Also write where Neal Livingston is. I wrote to him some time ago and have got no answer...and be certain to

let me know something about Elbert. I have wrote to him twice and I have never heard from him since I left. I have written 50 letters since I left. I write to you every week and the last letter I received from home was dated September 20th. Your letters are more apt to come through than ours.

Give my respect to Mr. McKinney if he is still living there...also to Mr. Goggin and Uncle Al's folks. Tell them Jem is well and as fat as a bacon hog. I weigh 41 lbs [141?] Six pounds more than ever I weighed before. This [scratched out].
The boys have come back from the bridge. It washed away while they were there....

Unfinished and unsigned

The third and last letter from Crow that was in Dr. Hudson's possession is dated November 2, 1861, and appeared to be waterstained and crumpled. Many letters of which we have no copies must have passed between Crow and his family. The letter heading indicates that Crow was then stationed near Union Mills, along the Bull Run–Manassas defense perimeter, which at that time was being put under the command of General Joseph E. Johnston. In *The Terrible Swift Sword*, Bruce Catton described the period during the autumn of 1861 as one of uncertainty and inaction.(15) After the battle of Bull Run, the armies of Northern and Central Virginia did little or nothing. The probable cause of this inertia was the lack of delivery of promised supplies from Britain and supplies on contract with mills and blacksmith shops in the Confederacy. While these contracts remained unfulfilled, thousands of recruits were ill-housed and restless, waiting to be equipped for war.

It is clear in this letter that Crow has just about run out of enthusiasm for the war. Crow mentions the necessity of getting adequate winter quarters, the shortage of food, and the severity of the weather the troops had to endure. When the rigors of winter appeared to be about to beset the military encampments, the

prevailing practice was to lay aside offensive weapons and go into winter quarters. One plan of J. E. Johnston, to have barracks constructed for the Virginia troops before the onslaught of winter in 1861, was defeated by delays and miscommunications. The men were then forced to show ingenuity in adapting tents for winter. Many of the soldiers, from lack of materials, simply had to be content with providing alternative heating facilities. Among the additions to the tents were floors, fireplaces, and dugouts for which the tent could serve as both insulation and upper story as well as roof.

Crow describes quite touchingly a winter night of rain in an army tent. He says that many of the men are out hauling wood, and the rest are grumbling about the lack of food. Food had become a scarce commodity for the Virginia troops in the winter of 1861. Wiley wrote that as early as the previous July many troops began to feel the pinch of short rations.(16) A week after the Bull Run battle, General Beauregard wrote to ask President Jefferson Davis not to send any more recruits to the Virginia front, "as some regiments are nearly starving." Some improvement was reported before General Johnston put the troops into winter quarters, but an investigation by Congress in January 1862 revealed a continuing shortage of vegetables, milk, and molasses.

Catton wrote that in the winter of 1862 one Confederate War Department official admitted privately that the Confederacy was weaker than it had been the past July, as is proven by the count of Johnston's troops.(17) In December 1861 General Johnston had a total of sixty-two thousand effective troops, but by February 1862 he had only forty-seven thousand. The losses were accounted for by desertions, short-term enlistments, and various other dispersions of troops.

Crow writes that conversations between spies and others on both sides have led the men to fear an attack in a few days. Crow quotes one spy as estimating that there are "two hundred thousand Yankees" facing the Manasses lines. Shelby Foote commented that

during the autumn of 1861, Union general McClellan made a practice of riding inspection through the Federal lines in Northern Virginia and would view the Centreville-Manasses line of the Confederacy with great apprehension. Foote explains that the Pinkerton spies had informed MacClellan that about ninety thousand gray-clad soldiers were hiding behind the earthwork fortifications.(18) Thus one can surmise that men on both sides were fearful from the greatly exaggerated enemy strength in numbers.

Crow complains about the lack of mail, adding that he has had no mail from his family since the third week of September. Wiley analyzed a vast number of letters from common soldiers, and his summation of the mail situation is an aid to insight into Crow's state of mind.

> With the deterioration of the transportation system, postal facilities degenerated and deliveries became matters of the greatest caprice. Soldiers chafed exceedingly at the tardiness of the mails. Most soldiers attributed their failure to get mail to the postal authorities. There were some, however, who were inclined to lay the fault at the door of their loved ones, whom they thought to be delinquent in writing because of dwindling affection or carelessness. In such instances, the note of hurt and despondency creeping into home letters was nothing short of poignant.(19)

The last entry in this letter is indeed poignant. Crow had said earlier that his tentmates were out trying to keep a bridge over Bull Run from washing away. He now says that the boys have returned. His final sentence is brief. "It washed away while they were there." This letter ends at this point, unsigned and unfinished. There is no evidence telling whether there was a missing page or whether Crow's illness grew worse and he was unable to complete the

letter. Still the letter reached his home; the family kept it for more than a century carefully bundled in an attic with the other letters. The reader, separated from the writer by the countless years, cannot refrain from offering up a few mental pleas on Crow's behalf. It is painful to leave him there unhappy, sick, lying in a tent behind an earthwork with the winter rain pouring in the flap and wondering if everyone at home has already forgotten him. The young, green, enthusiatic recruit of July has become the homesick, embittered, and ill soldier of November. Perhaps this alone firmly links him, forever and inseparably, with the soldiers of all the wars of men.

FOOTNOTES

1. Bell I. Wiley, *The Common Soldier of the Confederacy* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1943), II, 204
2. D. S. Freeman, *Lee's Lieutenants* (New York:Charles Scribner's Sons, 1944), 46 – 47
3. Bruce Catton, *The Coming Fury* (New York: Doubleday & Company Inc.,1961), 447
4. Shelby Foote, *The Civil War: A Narrative* (New York: Random House, 1958), I, 56
5. Wiley, *Common Soldier*, 161
6. Ibid., 36 – 40
7. Ibid., 157
8. Ibid., 32
9. Freeman, *Lee Lieutenants*, 79
10. Wiley, *Common Soldier*, 251
11. Ibid., 56
12. Ibid., 259
13. Freeman, *Lee's Lieutenants*, 99
14. Catton, *Coming Fury*, 471
15. Bruce Catton, *Terrible Swift Sword* (New York, Doubleday & Company, 1963), 72
16. Wiley, *Common Soldier*, 90
17. Catton, *Terrible Swift Sword* , 175
18. Foote, *Civil War*, 14
19. Wiley, *Common Soldier*, 201–202

# AN OLD LANDMARK GONE

The following article from *The Arkansas Sentinel*, March 17, 1891, came to us courtesy of Margaret McNutt and is reprinted here as written for your amusement and some insight into life in Fayetteville in its early days.

## A Log House Older than the State of Arkansas Torn Down and Worked up into Stove Wood
## A Few Facts Connected With Its First History

A few days since while on my way from my office to the Frisco Depot I noticed some men tearing down the old log house which stood on the west side of Block Street, about 150 feet north of the magnificent three-story brick building owned and occupied by the Bank of Fayetteville, in which our fellow townsman, Mr. J. W. Buie, had lived for the past 38 years, or ever since he was married. I stood at the front gate for some time watching the destruction of this old landmark, my thoughts busy with the past. I remembered that when I began my business life in Fayetteville clerking for James Sutton, March 8, 1852, this old log house was the home of Wm. M. Bowers, one of the energetic, prosperous business men of Fayetteville. Its history if correctly written would no doubt be of interest to some of your readers.

I cannot do justice to the subject but will give a few facts connected with its past history as personally known to me, and obtained from our old friend Col. A. M. Wilson, one of the very few business men of this city who were here when I came to make it my home, some forty years ago.

Col. Wilson does not know who built or first occupied the house in question, but says that in the summer of 1837 he acted as deputy Postmaster under General B. H. Smithson, who was then Postmaster, and the office was kept in that log house, which was then at the northern limits of the village. The hillside between that

and where Spring street now is was covered with a young growth of timber. There was not a great deal of work to do in the office, as there was but one mail arrival each week, and that was carried on a pony ridden by Irvin Adams. John Adams was the contractor (not our friend laughing John Adams of Little Rock). This weekly mail was brought from Big Northfork, then Lawrence County. There were but few letters brought to this office in those days, and they were expensive luxuries. If a letter had come 400 miles or more the person to whom it was addressed had to pay the P.M. "Two bits" (25 cts.) before he could enjoy the pleasure of reading it. If it had come less than 400 and over 300 miles it cost him three "Picayunes" (18 3/4 cts.), if less than 300 miles it cost a "Ninepence" (12 1/2 cts.). The Postmaster enjoyed the exclusive franking privilege and had the right to stamp letters sent by himself "free". There were two or three subscribers to the *Weekly Arkansas Gazette*, the only newspaper that came to the office, which usually arrived ten days after date of publication, which gave its readers here the latest news from Washington and other eastern cities, which was regarded as late news if not more than a month old.

This old house was not the location of the Post Office when first established nor was General Smithson the first Postmaster. Larkin Newton was the first Postmaster and kept the office in his dwelling house which was built on the side of the hill near the spring which flows out of the hill side between the Frisco railroad and Evergreen cemetery.

Our old Friend Z. M. Pettigrew says that in 1831 his father, George Pettigrew, who had settled a place six miles west of Fayetteville in the Allen Prairie, would send him to town once a week to the Post Office—that is after the service had been increased to a weekly service—the first year after a Post Office was established here the mail was a monthly mail—but was increased to a weekly as the country was settled up more thickly.

At that time there was but one cabin between George Pettigrew's and the village of Fayetteville which was the home of John Conner near the spring where now stands the Farmington steam mill.

One morning he started out from home at day break and arrived at the foot of the hill about sunrise and was riding up the narrow valley which leads up to the Big Spring, and close to the path that was beaten out along the bank of the spring branch was a "Lazy Tom" or pounding machine that was arranged to run by water power and owned by Mr. Newton the Postmaster. This "Lazy Tom" was kept busy both day and night, pounding into meal the corn that was put into the mortar. Mr. Pettigrew passing by made a discovery that the Postmaster had not made, as he had not yet gone to get meal for breakfast. A sly old coon had climbed into the mortar during the night to eat the meal, and "Lazy Tom" had pounded his coonship into sausage meat. Hair, hide, meat and meal were all mixed up in the mortar, and Pettigrew went on to the Postoffice and told Mr. Newton that he had both meat and meal ready for his breakfast. Mr. Newton had to clean out the mortar before he could use it again as a meal chest....

From the old records we find that the Commissioners sold that lot to B. H. Smithson in 1836 and we know that he lived there until his death which occurred in 1854.... J. H. V. H.

# THE RIDGE HOUSE: THE MISSING YEARS

LOUISE BRADSHAW ULMER

While working recently to update my article on Fayetteville's antebellum homes, I discovered that much about the Ridge House was still unknown. Before I knew it, I was caught up in trying to find those missing years after the Ridges left the house.

In 1836 the little crossroads in what had only a few years before been Indian Territory became incorporated. For the next thirty years Fayetteville was a busy settlement where merchants imported supplies for the farmers and ranchers who fought to tame the Ozark wilderness. Western Cherokee Territory lay only a few miles west in what would become Oklahoma. When, in 1837, the Jackson administration forced the Eastern Cherokee Removal, Fayetteville residents witnessed the migration firsthand as the last march of the Cherokees passed through and made camp at the big spring, now marked by the Trail of Tears monument on Highway 62 West near Razorback Stadium.

While the Cherokee migration was going on, a Fayetteville pioneer, Dr. M. H. Clark, was building a splendid-for-the-time two-room dog-trot log cabin near the square. The pine flooring and stone fireplaces remain today. The cabin would soon play an important role in the life of one of the immigrants, Mrs. John Ridge.

Sarah Ridge was the daughter of a Connecticut school teacher who married the son of a wealthy Indian chief and moved to his Georgia plantation. Marriages were fairly common among white colonists and the "civilized" Cherokees, especially among the younger generation, growing up and being educated together as

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Louise Ulmer now lives in Pennsylvania but spent most of her life in the Fayetteville–Springdale area. At age three she lived across the street from the Ridge House, where the fire station now stands. She is a writer of books, including the *ABCs of Food as Story, History, Tradition, and Nutrition* and many children's books.

they were. The Ridges were proud of their wealth, which they earned as plantation owners in imitation of their southern colonial neighbors. Unfortunately, Georgia colonials preferred to have all the land for themselves. Their solution to the "Indian problem" was to have the Indians take themselves west.

The Indians were divided on how to respond. Sarah's husband, John Ridge, believed resistance was useless and thought it wise for the tribes to make the best bargain they could. The Ridges were among the first to sign the Treaty of Removal, sell their home, and take a boat to Ft. Smith. Those Indians who resisted found themselves rounded up, burned off their property, and herded to the West. That infamous page in history is well known. Not only did the Cherokee face forced removal, the treaty split them into two factions. Unable to fight back against the white government, resisters blamed their own leaders who had cooperated with the treaty. Since Chief Ridge and his son saw the coming tragedy and left early, they were considered traitors. After the last of the forced removal, John was stabbed on the doorsteps of his home near Southwest City, Missouri. In the bloodbath that followed Sarah lost her father-in-law and a nephew, in addition to her husband.

Sarah fled with her children to Fayetteville and in 1840 bought the newly remodeled Clark home two blocks from the square, which had been converted from a two-room cabin to a two-story frame house in the saltbox style. Sarah's home is now called Ridge House. The Ridges left the area about twenty years later, and where Sarah went is still a mystery. Sarah died between 1854 and 1859. The exact date and burial place is not known. (*Flashback*, February 1992).

The history picks up again in 1859 when young entrepreneur Joseph Holcomb bought the house. He may have intended to live in it with his new bride in 1860, but something changed his plans, and he sold it in 1861 to John G. Scarborough the same month the Civil War started. Holcomb played a part in the history of three

houses on Center Street. This is where we find another gap in the history.

Tandy Kidd came to Washington County, bought land, opened a store and began operating the Truesdell grain mill by 1847. The Kidd family is a story in itself, but for this history we only need to know that wealthy businessman Kidd bought the Ridge house in 1861, the same year two of his sons were mustered into the Confederate Army. He may have intended it for his son William and his new wife Mary Moore, but he didn't live to see it. Tandy Kidd was murdered in 1862, leaving no will and a great many headaches for his heirs. The Kidds did not have long to enjoy the house, and it ended in a sheriff's sale in 1867. J. D. Walker, from across the street, and J. R. Pettigrew bought the house at a bargain price.

When rumors of war came to the Ozarks, residents scarcely believed it. True, some of Fayetteville's wealthiest did own a few slaves, but the idea of going to war over such a thing did not occur to them. As in most communities close to the Mason-Dixon Line, sympathies were divided, though geographically and culturally Fayetteville was decidedly Southern. Politically, she was something else again. Many prominent families who had moved here from Northern states, like the Tebbetts of Dickson Street, were in favor of a strong Union and were radically against secession. The stage was set for the war to play a great part in Northwest Arkansas and with it the Center Street houses.

In February 1862 the Union Army was heading south from Springfield toward Fayetteville. The Confederate soldiers already stationed here were not ready for an offensive and decided to withdraw to the safety of the Boston Mountains. Carrying out the scorched earth policy, which destroyed most of the South before the war was over, the Rebels began burning anything they could not carry with them to prevent its use by the approaching Federals.

Fayetteville's wooden storefronts around the square were engulfed in flames as residents watched their dreams go up in

smoke. Today visitors can still see some of the stores dating from the Reconstruction period of the 1870s when the town rebuilt. The Ridge House, the Walker-Stone House and Moore's Chapel are the three prewar homes near the burned-out square that remain with us.

In 1873 J.R. Pettigrew sold the Ridge House to Z.M. Pettigrew, wherein Uncle "Zeb" and Aunt "Puss" Pettigrew operated a boarding house. They are listed as owners until 1908. The abstract owned by the Washington County Historical Society ends before this period begins.

From Tony Wappel at the Washington County Archives Office we were able to learn the other owners of the house:

1909–1912— Banker F. P. Earl is listed as trustee.
1913–1922 —J. M. Bloyd owned the house.
1923–1924—O.L. Wolfe.
1925—W. F. Duncan.
1925—1971— Lillian Cory.

After serving as an apartment house until about 1970, the oldest house in Fayetteville barely escaped destruction when set on fire, presumably accidentally, by a homeless boy who had taken refuge in the empty building. The burned-out shell stood empty for several years until the church nearby bought it with the intent of turning the space into a parking lot. When word got out that the historic house faced demolition, the Washington County Historical Society rallied to the rescue, purchased and restored the house. They left a portion of the original log cabin, which can be viewed through the walls. Today the famous home houses medical offices.

The Ridge House is luckier than many antebellum homes. I remember walking through it when it was a burned-out shell, wishing I knew more about it. Thanks to the historical society, we still have this national treasure and we know a great deal about it.

# BEAN CEMETERY AND BOB KIDD LAKE

IZOLA PRESTON

Bean Cemetery was the burial place of the African Americans of Cane Hill, Lincoln, and Summers, Arkansas.[1] The land for the cemetery was donated by John Wesley and Eliza Bean, who came to the Lincoln area in 1853.

In 1994 Bean Cemetery was placed on the National Registry of Historic Places. There are graves in the cmetery dating back to 1874, with stones for Anderson Bean, 1878, Isaac Brown, 1883, Doc. Kidd, 1894, and Bob Kidd, 1924. Many others are buried in there in unmarked graves.

Bob Kidd was brought to western Washington County in the 1830s by Tandy Kidd, who operated a mill and had extensive land holdings in the Lincoln area. In 1862 Tandy Kidd was murdered and Bob Kidd was later freed. He worked hard in the fields and orchards and his wife did washing and other domestic work for the Helms family. Later, they purchased forty acres of mostly wasteland in what was called Bob Kidd Hollow. The Kidd family increased and Mrs. Kidd died.

In the community there was a great deal of camaradarie among the people. Neighbors came to visit—talking, joking, and sometimes Bob Kidd played his fiddle for dancing.

Years passed and the children of Bob Kidd went off to school and married into mobility-conscious families. One daughter named her first baby Lena after Mrs. Lena Helms, a member of the Prairie Grove community.

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Many years later Kidd grew too old and sick with arthritis to cut enough wood for a fire. He picked up sticks and trash to make a fire to boil coffee and fry eggs, if some were available. One day neighbors called on him only to find him under six layers of thin ragged bed covers. He died of exposure and malnutrituion in 1924.

In 1975 the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission purchased two hundred acres for Bob Kidd Lake just outside Prairie Grove. The lake has exceptionally good crappie fishing. A plaque is in place at the lake that reads:

BOB KIDD 1824–1924
IN MEMORY OF BOB KIDD
BORN A SLAVE IN 1824.
HE WORKED HARD IN THE
FIELDS OF NORTHWEST ARKANSAS
TO ACQUIRE 40 ACRES OF LAND ON
WHICH TO BUILD A HOME AND RAISE
A FAMILY. HE WAS WELL LIKED BY
THE LOCAL RESIDENTS WHO NAMED THE
LAKE IN HIS HONOR. HE IS BURIED IN
BEAN CEMETERY.

Endnote

1. Conrad Russell, *Flashback*, Vol. 25, 1975, 13–17.

# REMEMBERING FAYETTE JUNCTION

ADDIE LEE LISTER

I was about five years of age in 1922 when my daddy was the third trick operator at the depot in Fayette Junction, also known as Vale. There were three operators, working eight-hour shifts beginning at seven A.M. Daddy worked from eleven P.M. until seven A.M.

Fayette Junction was called the junction because the main line of the Frisco passed through there, and there was a Y where engines could turn around. Further, two branch lines came in there. One was the St. Paul Branch, which went east through Elkins, Durham, Crosses, St. Paul, and on to Pettigrew, where there was a turntable for the return trip. The other line was the O. C.& C., commonly called "Old Cow and Calf" by the railroad personnel. This line went west through Farmington, Prairie Grove, Lincoln, Summers, and into Oklahoma to Okmulgee.

At that time Fayette Junction was a very busy place for the railroad. We had no car or conveyance, so my parents rented a small house across the tracks from the depot. Having no other child with whom to play, I roamed around the small area. At that time there were two important mills there. One was called Sligo Mill—I don't remember what they made—and the other was Bower Mill. There the walnut logs had to be soaked in very hot water.

Forbidden to go to the "Log Bath" place, I went as often as I could sneak away, as I was fascinated by the huge bark-covered walnut logs bobbing in a big concrete bath of very hot water to

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Addie Lee Lister now lives in Prairie Village, Kansas. She decided to share her recollections after reading "Fayette Junction: Hub of Washington County's 1885–1935 Timber Boom" by Denele Campbell in the Winter 2005 issue of *Flashback*.

remove the bark. The logs were then milled, and among other things, used to make grape baskets used in harvesting.

My interest in the vat was the boiling logs, rumbling and constantly moving in the hot water. My mother's interest in it all was that I not fall in and get boiled with the logs. But I would sneak away and stand on the concrete walk around the vat, which had no fence or barrier surrounding it. I never did hear of anyone getting boiled with the logs—certainly I did not, but I loved to watch them.

My neighbor was a boy a bit older than I, whose name was Stone. He did not like the logs but hunted diligently along the railroad track for the "torpedoes" the railroad men used for signals to the engineer. These were fastened to a rail and detonated when the engine passed over them, denoting a signal to the engineer. The Stone boy finally found one fastened and detonated it with a rock. Several days were spent picking metal splinters from his arms, legs, and hands. Fortunately his eyes were not damaged.

The local store was at the end of a path about ten blocks away from our house. It was a favorite place to go spend my nickle. They also had penny candy, much enjoyed.

The many trains that went through each day also entertained me. I would wave to the train crew, and they happily waved back, blew the whistle, and rang the bell. Once in a while they would take me up in the engine and let me ring the ball and blow the whistle. Those were stellar occasions.

I continue to feel sorry for all little girls who did not get to live all summer at Fayette Junction, waving at trains, watching boiling logs, listening to torpedoes go off, and walking to the store for a nickle's worth of penny candy. I am no eighty-eight years of age, but the memories are as yesterday and still fascinating to recall.

# GREENLAND 1925–1935

DENELE CAMPBELL

Author's note: The following is based on interview with Richard Milsap at his home in Farmington, October 2005.

Then, as now, the heart of Greenland in the early twentieth century lay in the district school. The old two-story frame building that had served for many years had been retired in 1922 in favor of the new rock schoolhouse. Between the two buildings were the outdoor athletic facilities—outdoor basketball courts, one for girls and one for boys, plus the baseball diamond all in the place where the new gym in now located. Basketball was just getting started—Winslow's gymnasium with its dirt floor was the only one in the area. Baseball was the most popular sport, and Greenland had a winning team, even though in those days all schools competed with each other, large and small.

When the Greenland teams played, everyone in the community would come to the games, which were usually held on Friday afternoons. Wagons and horse riders from the east would cross the river at a wide graveled spot slightly southeast from the current school buildings. There was a swinging bridge at this location as well, so that pedestrians could get across the river even when the water was high. The old road that followed this path teed onto Highway 71 just south of the old two-story school building. People from as far as Tilly Willy and up Slatey Gap road to the east, or out west along Cato Springs Road up to the Dowell property came down for the games.

Richard Milsap has memories about the athletic events because he was an athlete. His graduating class of 1935 included six girls and four boys. With enrollment so small, the school

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Denele Campbell is the author of two recent articles in Flashback: "Fayette Junction: Hub of Washington County's 1885–1935 Timber Boom" (Vol. 55, No. 1, Winter 2005) and "Fayetteville's Grocery Stores: 1830–2005 (Vol. 55, No. 3, Summer 2005).

could not field a football team but they excelled in swimming and baseball. After graduation, Richard went to the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville on an athletic scholarship for a semester before accepting a paying position on a semi-pro baseball team sponsored by Cudahy Packing Company north of Wichita, Kansas. Local jobs were scarce in those days, and most Greenland graduates tried to help make money from the family farm or moved away.

Richard's older siblings—three sisters and an older brother—had gone to class at Rieff Chapel down Pear Lane, the original school serving the area nearest his family's farm. Other schools soon to consolidate into Greenland's district were Fairview, which was about one mile south of the current truck stop at I-540 and Wilson Avenue, and a school farther south on Campbell Loop. A combination of poverty that struck the area during Depression years and increasing demands for more advanced educational offerings made it clear to parents that consolidating the schools offered more for their children.

Like others living near the Johnson Pear Farm or the one hundred-acre Cook Orchard, Richard and other neighbor children would help harvest crops and get them to the railroad station for shipment. Fruit production was a primary income for the farms in the fertile valleys and hillsides around Greenland. Many small landowners grew strawberries; thousands of pounds of strawberries were loaded and shipped from Greenland's railroad depot. Other cash crops included raspberries, blackberries, and apples. Most families also grew food for themselves and their livestock, everything from corn to sweet potatoes, Irish potatoes, tomatoes, onions, greens, and beans.

Aside from the school, Greenland hosted two general stores, a blacksmith, a soda fountain, a dentist, and a few other concerns. An older mercantile that had once occupied a two-story building near the blacksmith had closed, but the new two-story Yoes store not only stocked everything from sugar to

gingham, but also provided upstairs rooms for operations of the community government and lodge meetings, among other things. The Yoes house sat immediately south of the store. South of that was the building partly rented by the Smiths for their soda fountain operation, which included a counter and a few tables where patrons would order the popular flavors of the day. Across the highway from the soda fountain was the old school house and the road that crossed the river at the swinging bridge.

West of the Yoes store, between the store and the railroad tracks, was the house of the Frisco section foreman, whose job it was to use the hand car to inspect and keep repaired the stretch of track that ran from the Fayetteville section south through Greenland to the West Fork section. Across the tracks, the road split into a Y. On the south side of the Y, in the location of the current Church of Christ, was the town well, the old mercantile building, and the blacksmith. In the center of the Y was the house of Doc Wilson the dentist, and to the north of the Y was Doc Wilson's fancy large barn where he housed his extensive mule operation, as well as his horses and the little cart he kept for racing. It was Doc Wilson who provided funds to build Greenland's first gymnasium (now the "old" gym) around 1940.

North of the Yoes store, immediately across Wilson Street and adjacent to the railroad tracks, was the Greenland depot. The building was of standard design, about twenty-five by fifty feet, and included a long platform facing the tracks where passengers and freight could wait for the train. The Greenland depot was a flag stop, but mail and daily papers from Fayetteville and Fort Smith could be thrown from a slow-moving train even when the flag wasn't out, and a pole with a hook for the mail bag stood by the track so that the train men could grab the mailbag as they passed. The agent could also telegraph ahead to schedule stops. Aside from residences, one other business occupied the area north of Wilson Street between the tracks and Highway 71, and that was Harmon's Grocery, which also sold gasoline. Their

competitor in the new gasoline business was situated across the highway to the east. Both stations required customers and/or the attendant to hand pump the fuel from underground tanks.

Northeast of Jacob Yoes's store across the highway and Wilson Street (which dead-ended in front of the new rock school) was his arch competitor, Marion Bruce Crider's store. Crider's was not as big as Yoes's, but the politics differed. When the newly elected president of the United States filled all the postmaster jobs with political appointees, the post office of Greenland moved according to the political party. When a Republican administration reigned, the post office was in Yoes's store. When a Democrat was in power, the post office was in Crider's Grocery. In the meantime, patrons might select their preferred shopping place based on partisan interests. North of Crider's store, before the filling station, was a barber shop run by Fred Bradshaw, which also hosted a shoeshine chair where young boys could earn a dime per shine.

One of the only local industries was Parker Brothers Nursery, which grew acres of young trees and other nursery stock on the rich bottomlands around Greenland. Their lands, as well as parcels owned and cultivated by Doc Wilson and his hired hands, abutted the river and swampland on the east, the school grounds, and the small dirt runway and airport facility stretching north and west to the hills. In addition to providing jobs for local workers, Parker Brothers sponsored the Greenland Community Band, which practiced in the upper rooms of Yoes's store and included a trombone, drums, trumpet, clarinet, saxophone, and various other instruments. Marion Crider's sons Paul and Mitchell also successfully pursued the nursery business in this deep valley soil.

Church meetings were held in the school building and also at the Baptist Ford church farther south. Church groups hosted social events like singings, suppers and pie auctions. Aside from church activities and athletic events at the school, entertainment

for Greenland area folks included parties in homes, where young people might play card games such as Pitch and Spoons or on rare occasions, might dance. Once in awhile an air show would come to the nearby field, and barnstormers in bi-planes would thrill the crowd and kids watching from the hillsides with amazing feats of flying upside down, wing walking, and hanging from the wings. Many in Greenland also traveled to the yearly Washington County Fair, which was held in the old fairgrounds location at Razorback Road north of 6th Street up to Nettleship. Some, like Richard at age six, walked with their parents along the four miles of railroad track to reach the county fair from Greenland.

After leaving to play baseball, Richard did not return to Greenland until late in life. Most of what he remembered from his school days in Greenland has changed. Doc Wilson's house still stands, as does the 1922 Greenland school building, although the rock structure is surrounded by many newer school buildings. The Yoes store and Crider Grocery are gone, and the soda fountain building long ago gave way to a lumber yard, which now sits vacant. School athletic events still draw supporters from miles around, as the district expanded dramatically when Marion's son Bruce Crider served as county judge. Other than two gas station/convenience stores, an occasional café, a used car dealership, and the largely inactive Fayetteville Municipal Airport, Greenland remains a place with a school whose young people go elsewhere for their livelihood, just as it did when Richard Milsap graduated in 1935.

## PLANNED GIFTS

Making charitable gifts during your lifetime can provide income, gift, and estate-tax savings, and making charitable gifts in your will can provide an estate-deduction for the value of that gift.

If you are making regular gifts to the Washington County Historical Society or would like to start, you may find it beneficial to set up or give:

1. **A charitable lead trust** that will pay income to WCHS for a set period.
2. **A charitable remainder trust** that will allow you to transfer property to a trust set up for WCHS without paying capital gains tax on the sale of the property.
3. **Appreciated securities** at their current value and take an income tax deduction for the year up to 30% of adjusted gross income.
4. **Gifts from your retirement account** that could be an integral part of planning for those withdrawals.
5. **An irrevocable life insurance trust** that could own your life insurance, when it no longer serves its purpose, to make a charitable gift that could reduce the estate's tax bill.

There are a number of ways to enhance your retirement plans while still providing for your charitable interests and making gifts you never dreamed possible. Consult with your financial advisor on other ways you can make charitable donations. These planned gifts will provide added tax benefits for you and your beneficiaries while helping to support the vital mission of the Washington County Historical Society for years to come.